

**Sergeant Rowland W. Evans  
First Combat Color Bearer  
Of the  
18<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry's  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

Rowland W. Evans a farmer from Franklin County, Ohio enlisted at the age of 21 in the 18<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry, October 22, 1861 at New Albany, Ohio. Evans and over 30 other men had been recruited by Lieutenant William J. Fetterman and on October 31, 1861 after a big festival in their honor set off to Camp Thomas the 18<sup>th</sup> U.S. depot just north of Columbus, Ohio. Evans was assigned of Company F, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion and on July 2, 1862 he was promoted to sergeant and shortly after became the color bearer for the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. While Sergeant Evans was not the first man to carry the regiment's colors, he was the first man to carry them into combat. He carried the regiment's flag into every battle the regiment fought in during the Civil War except for its last at Jonesboro, Georgia, where he was wounded in the right arm. Just prior to the Battle of Jonesboro his stint as color sergeant ended as the result of disciplinary action. During the course of the war Sergeant Evans saw 12 members of the color guard fall around him in defense of the flag he so proudly carried. At Chickamauga Sergeant Evans carried the flag off the field under the most difficult of conditions following a prolonged and severe engagement in which the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's flag was lost. During the chaos following the battle, prisoners from the 18<sup>th</sup> U.S. located the lost flag, tore it from its staff, ripped it into pieces, and then carried it hidden in their clothes to southern prisons.

Evans survived the war and returned to Ohio where family and friends painted a large battle flag on the side of a barn to honor to him and several other relatives that had also served with distinction in the war. The barn belonged to Alexander Doran, an Ohio veteran who was married to Evans' sister Cynthia. Rowland Evans had carried an Ambrotype photograph of Cynthia Doran and her infant son Perry, in his breast pocket throughout the war. The barn still exists today near New Albany, Ohio and was restored for the fourth time in 1999, at which time the battle flag was completely repainted. The barn has come to represent more than just the actions of a few courageous men. It is now represents a community's legacy of pride in all those who have served their county since Evans first carried the colors of the 18<sup>th</sup> U.S. in combat.

*Tom Crew  
Long Beach, Mississippi  
May 2000*